

Where Is Allaah?

Call To Islam Research

Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) has the Attribute of *Al-Uluww* (Highness or Transcendence) and that is why this issue of "where is Allaah" comes under the category of Tawheedul-Asmaa was-Sifaat (Maintaining The Unity Of Allaah's Names and Attributes).

So where is Allaah?

Allaah is present over His Mighty Throne above the seven heavens. It is not like some people think Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) is present here, there and everywhere. This is not true. Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) tells us that He is above the heavens, over His Throne. He (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) says:

"The Most Gracious (Allaah) "Istawa" (rose over)¹ the (Mighty) Throne (in a manner that suits His Majesty)."²

And He (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) also says:

"Do you feel secure that He, Who is Over the heaven (Allaah), will not cause the earth to sink with you, and then it should quake? Or do you feel secure that He Who is over the heaven (Allaah), will not send against you a violent whirlwind? Then you shall know how (terrible) has been My Warning."³

Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) says many times in the Qur'aan: The angels arise up to Him, the angels descend, He sends down the rain, that He sent down the Qur'aan, and other such statements which make clear the belief that Allaah is separate from His creation and high above them.

Also there is the Hadeeth of Mu'awiyah as-Sahmi (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) who reported:

"I had some sheep which I kept between Uhud and Juwaniyyah with a slave-girl to look after them. One day, I went out to check on my sheep and discovered that a wolf had devoured one of them. Since I am just a human, (I became angry) and struck the girl. Later on, I came to the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) and reported to him the incident. He terrified me with the gravity of my action. I said, 'Messenger of Allaah! Shall I free her (as an expiation of my sin). He said 'Call her over'. When I did, he asked her, 'Where is Allaah?' She said, 'Above the heavens'. Then he asked her, 'Who am I?' She said, 'The Messenger of Allaah (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam)'. Thereupon, the Messenger of Allaah (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) ordered me, 'Free her. She is a believer'."⁴

Look carefully at this Hadeeth. Why did the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) in order to determine whether the girl was a believer or not, not ask her whether she believed in Allaah (ie His existence)? It is because the vast majority of the people at the time of the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) believed in Allaah's Existence but they directed their worship to other than Allaah (Subhanahu wa

¹ Imaam Bukharee related in Kitaabut-Tawheed from Abul-'Aaliyah and Mujaahid regarding the explanation of Istawa: "It is His Highness and Rising."

² Surah Ta-Ha (20):5

³ Surah Al Mulk (67):16-17

⁴ Saheeh Muslim (Eng. Trans) vol 1 p271-272 no 1094

ta'ala) by way of intermediation. This is the danger of not believing that Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) is above His Throne separate and distinct from the creation – it leads to the worship of creation.

Also the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) reported his eventful journey from Makkah to Jerusalem and from there up to the heavens (al-Israa wal Mi'raj).⁵ The summary of that report is:

"Jibreel took me up to the lowest heaven and requested its guards to open its gate. He was asked, 'Who is this?' He answered, 'Jibreel.' 'Who is with you?,' they inquired. 'Muhammad' (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) He answered. They inquired. 'Has he been invited?' 'Yes'. Jibreel replied. Then someone greeted saying, 'He is most welcome'." The Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) continued, "when the gate was opened, I entered and met Aadam there. Jibreel said to me, 'This is your father, greet him'. Aadam greeted me back, saying: 'Welcome, pious son and pious Prophet'. Then Jibreel ascended to the second heaven and requested its guards to open its gate." The questioning that took place in the lowest heaven was repeated before the gate was opened. The Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) described what he saw in every heaven, until finally he was taken up to the seventh heaven where he spoke to Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) and the obligatory prayers were prescribed to him.

This authentic Hadeeth speaks clearly in plain words and a straightforward manner which is not liable to misconstruction or farfetched interpretations. The Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) was taken up to his Rubb from one heaven above the other. The Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah believe that the Mi'raj was neither an illusion nor a vision, rather real and essential. Had Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) been everywhere, why would the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) be taken all the way up to the seventh heaven? Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) would have prescribed to him the Salaah on earth rather than in the seventh heaven!!

These are some of the numerous proofs from the Qur'an and Sunnah that Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) is not everywhere in terms of His dhatt (Self). In fact, Ibnu Abil Izz (Rahimahu 'Llah) said: "And if these proofs by themselves were gathered up, they would reach about one thousand in number."⁶

Imaam Badee ud-Deen Shah as-Sindee (d1416) (Rahimahu 'Llah) states⁷: Al Hafidh Abu Abdullah ibn Battah (d387H) said in the book Al-Ibaanah:

"The Muslims from the Companions and the Tabieen have consensus upon the fact that Allaah is above His Throne, above the heavens, separate from the creation."

Look at what Imaam Abu Hanifah (d150H) (Rahimahu 'Llah) said about this issue. Abu Muti' Al-Balkhi reported:

"I asked Imam Abu Hanifah about a person who says, 'I do not know whether my

Rubb is, above the heavens or on earth?' Abu Hanifah, (Rahimahu 'Llah), said: 'A person who makes such a statement **becomes a disbeliever** because Allaah, the Exalted says, **"The Merciful has ascended above the 'Arsh"**, and the 'Arsh of Allaah is above His heavens'. I further asked Abu Hanifah, 'What if such a person

⁵ Bukhari, Muslim and others

⁶ Sharhul-Aqeedatit-Tahawiyyah p.288

⁷ Article: The Necessity For The Imaam To Have Correct Aqeedah - Shaykh As-Sindee

admits, Allaah is above His 'Arsh, but exclaims, I do not know whether His 'Arsh is above the heavens or on earth'. Abu Hanifah responded: 'If he denies that the 'Arsh is above the heavens, he is a disbeliever.' ⁸

Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Uthaymeen (Rahimahu 'Llah) said:

"We do not say as the incarnationists (hulooliyyah) from the Jahmiyyah and others say: 'That He is with His creation upon the Earth.' We believe that whoever says this is a disbeliever (kaafir), or a deviant, because he has described Allaah with what is unbefitting to Him of defects." ⁹

So if after all these proofs a person still holds that Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) is everywhere in terms of His Essence then we may try rational proofs as Shaykh Ibnul-Uthaymeen (Rahimahu 'Llah) advised, if a person does not respond to the textual proofs then try intellectual proofs. ¹⁰

So we can present two intellectual arguments by which Allaah may guide them:

1) If Allaah is everywhere in terms of His *dhaat* (Self) then that would mean that he is in the dirt, faeces, and urine – free is He from what the mushriks ascribe to Him. When confronted with this conclusion, most people naturally reject it. But, this is what one is saying when one says "Allaah is everywhere", because if Allaah is everywhere then he must be in everything!!! How can they say He is everywhere and by that not mean also that He is in everything?? So with this they find themselves instinctually unable to accept any statement which implies that Allaah is present in man's excrement or in any other items or places not befitting His majesty. So they reject this due to their fitrah or natural disposition with which Allaah created mankind.

2) It is obvious that in a case where two things exist, one of those things must either be part of the other and dependant on it like its attributes, or it must exist by itself, distinct from the other. Thus, when Allaah created the world, either He created it inside Himself or He created it outside of Himself. The first possibility is unacceptable because it would mean that Allaah, the infinite and Supreme, has within Himself finite attributes of deficiency and weakness. Therefore, He must have created the world outside of Himself as an entity distinct from Himself yet depending on Him. Having created the world outside of Himself, He either created it above Himself or below Himself. Since human experience nowhere confirms prayer downwards, and being below creation contradicts Allaah's majesty and supremacy, Allaah must therefore be above His creation and distinct from it.

As to the contradictory descriptive statements that Allaah is neither connected to the world nor separate from it, or that He is neither in the world or outside it, such words are not only illogical but they, in fact, deny God's actual existence. Such claims relegate God to the surrealistic realm of human thought where opposites can co-exist and the impossible exist (like three Gods in one). ¹¹

So the truth of the matter is that Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) is over the seventh Heaven above His Mighty Throne; but He is with us by His **KNOWLEDGE ONLY**, not by His Self.

⁸ Sharhul-Aqeedatit-Tahawiyyah p.288

⁹ Tenets of Faith p.19 Shaykh Muhammad Ibnu Saalih Al-Uthaymeen

¹⁰ Tape: Advice To The Muslims In UK – Shaykh Muhammad Ibnu Saalih Al-Uthaymeen

¹¹ The Fundamentals Of Tawheed (al-Hidaayah publishers) p119-120

Some people misunderstand Verses such as **"and He is with you wheresover you are"** ¹² and: **"there is no secret discourse of three people except that he is the fourth.."** ¹³ to mean Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) is omnipresent.

Imaam Ahmad (Rahimahu 'Llah) was asked about these two verses - and he said:

'(meaning) His Knowledge, He is the Knower of the seen and the unseen, His knowledge encompasses everything, and our Lord is above the Arsh (Throne) without setting limits and giving description, and His Kursi (Chair) is as the expanse of the heavens and the earth with His Knowledge.' ¹⁴

So we believe that Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) is with His creation by His knowledge and He is over His Throne. He knows their condition, hears their speech, sees their action, manages their affairs, sustains the poor and grants relief to the devastated. He grants dominion to whoever He wills, removes it from whomever He wills, honours whom He wills and debases whom He wills. In His Hand is all good and He has power over all things. So when the affair is like this, then He truly is with His creation; even though He – in reality – is above them over His Throne. ¹⁵

Finally, it may be worthwhile to say that even simple minded Hindus in India remember the Lord as "Uper-Wala" or "the one who is above" ¹⁶ and even the enemy of Allaah, Fir'awn (Pharoah), who flagrantly claimed to be a god of his people, knew where Allaah was. Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) says:

"And Fir'awn said, 'O, Haman, build for me a tower that I may reach the ways; the ways to heavens so that I may have a look at the Ilaah of Musa.'" ¹⁷

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¹² Surah Hadid (57):4

¹³ Surah Al-Mujadilah (58):7

¹⁴ 'Sharh Usul I'tiqaad' of al-Laalikaaee (pg.402)

¹⁵ see Tenets of Faith p.19 Shaykh Muhammad Ibnu Saalih Al-Uthaymeen

¹⁶ see The Jamaatut-Tableegh And The Deobandis p58

¹⁷ Surah Al-Ghafir (40):36-37